The NPT is commonly described as having three main "pillars": non-proliferation, disarmament, and peaceful use.[4] This "pillars" concept has been questioned by some who believe that the NPT is, as its name suggests, principally about nonproliferation, and who worry that "three pillars" language misleadingly implies that the three elements have equivalent importance.[5][[*dead link*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Link_rot)]

[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nuclear_Non-Proliferation_Treaty&action=edit&section=2)]

**First pillar: non-proliferation**

Five states are recognized by the Non-Proliferation Treaty as nuclear weapon states (NWS): [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Republic_of_China) (signed 1992), [France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France) (1992), the Soviet Union (1968; obligations and rights now assumed by the [Russian Federation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Federation)), the [United Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) (1968), and the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) (1968) (The United States, UK, and the Soviet Union were the only states openly possessing such weapons among the original [ratifiers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratification) of the treaty, which entered into force in 1970). These five nations are also the five permanent members of the [United Nations Security Council](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council). These five NWS agree not to transfer "nuclear weapons or other [nuclear explosive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_explosive) devices" and "not in any way to assist, encourage, or induce" a non-nuclear weapon state (NNWS) to acquire nuclear weapons (Article I). NNWS parties to the NPT agree not to "receive," "manufacture" or "acquire" nuclear weapons or to "seek or receive any assistance in the manufacture of nuclear weapons" (Article II). NNWS parties also agree to accept safeguards by the [**International Atomic Energy Agency**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Atomic_Energy_Agency) (IAEA) to verify that they are not diverting nuclear energy from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons or other [nuclear explosive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_explosive) devices (Article III).

The five NWS parties have made undertakings not to use their nuclear weapons against a non-NWS party except in response to a nuclear attack, or a conventional attack in alliance with a Nuclear Weapons State. However, these undertakings have not been incorporated formally into the treaty, and the exact details have varied over time. The U.S. also had nuclear warheads targeted at North Korea, a non-NWS state, from 1959 until 1991. The previous United Kingdom [Secretary of State for Defence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secretary_of_State_for_Defence), [Geoff Hoon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geoff_Hoon), has also explicitly invoked the possibility of the use of the country's nuclear weapons in response to a non-conventional attack by "[rogue states](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rogue_states)".[6] In January 2006, President [Jacques Chirac](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacques_Chirac) of [France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France) indicated that an incident of state-sponsored terrorism on France could trigger a small-scale nuclear retaliation aimed at destroying the "rogue state's" power centers.[7][8]

[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nuclear_Non-Proliferation_Treaty&action=edit&section=3)]

**Second pillar: disarmament**

The NPT's preamble contains language affirming the desire of treaty signatories to ease international tension and strengthen international trust so as to create someday the conditions for a halt to the production of nuclear weapons, and treaty on general and complete disarmament that liquidates, in particular, nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles from national arsenals.

The wording of the NPT's Article VI arguably imposes only a vague obligation on all NPT signatories to move in the general direction of nuclear and total disarmament, saying, "Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament."[9] Under this interpretation, Article VI does not strictly require all signatories to actually conclude a disarmament treaty. Rather, it only requires them "to negotiate in good faith."[10] The International Court of Justice, in its Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, issued 8 July 1996, went beyond the text of Article VI in its unanimous conclusion that "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control."[11]

Some governments, especially non-nuclear-weapon states belonging to the [Non-Aligned Movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-Aligned_Movement), have interpreted Article VI's language as being anything but vague. In their view, Article VI constitutes a formal and specific obligation on the NPT-recognized nuclear-weapon states to disarm themselves of nuclear weapons, and argue that these states have failed to meet their obligation. Some government delegations to the Conference on Disarmament have put forth proposals for a complete and universal disarmament, but no disarmament treaty has emerged from these proposals.[*[citation needed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)*] Critics of the NPT-recognized nuclear-weapon states sometimes argue that what they view as the failure of the NPT-recognized nuclear weapon states to disarm themselves of nuclear weapons, especially in the post–[Cold War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_War) era, has angered some non-nuclear-weapon NPT signatories of the NPT. Such failure, these critics add, provides justification for the non-nuclear-weapon signatories to quit the NPT and develop their own nuclear arsenals.

Other observers have suggested that the linkage between proliferation and disarmament may also work the other way, i.e., that the failure to resolve proliferation threats in Iran and North Korea, for instance, will cripple the prospects for disarmament.[*[citation needed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)*] No current nuclear weapons state, the argument goes, would seriously consider eliminating its last nuclear weapons without high confidence that other countries would not acquire them. Some observers have even suggested that the very progress of disarmament by the superpowers—which has led to the elimination of thousands of weapons and delivery systems[12]—could eventually make the possession of nuclear weapons more attractive by increasing the perceived strategic value of a small arsenal. As one U.S. official and NPT expert warned in 2007, "logic suggests that as the number of nuclear weapons decreases, the 'marginal utility' of a nuclear weapon as an instrument of military power increases. At the extreme, which it is precisely disarmament’s hope to create, the strategic utility of even one or two nuclear weapons would be huge."[13]

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**Third pillar: peaceful use of nuclear energy**

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|  | This section **needs additional** [**citations**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citing_sources#Inline_citations) **for** [**verification**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Verifiability)**.**  Please help [improve this article](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nuclear_Non-Proliferation_Treaty&action=edit) by adding [reliable references](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Identifying_reliable_sources). Unsourced material may be [challenged](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) and [removed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Verifiability#Burden_of_evidence). *(March 2008)* |

The third pillar allows for and agrees upon the transfer of nuclear technology and materials to NPT signatory countries for the development of civilian nuclear energy programs in those countries, as long as they can demonstrate that their nuclear programs are not being used for the development of nuclear weapons.

Since very few of the states with [nuclear energy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_power) programs are willing to abandon the use of nuclear energy, the third pillar of the NPT under Article IV provides other states with the possibility to do the same, but under conditions intended to make it difficult to develop nuclear weapons.

The treaty recognizes the inalienable right of sovereign states to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, but restricts this right for NPT parties to be exercised "in conformity with Articles I and II" (the basic nonproliferation obligations that constitute the "first pillar" of the Treaty). As the commercially popular [light water reactor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Light_water_reactor) [nuclear power station](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_power_station) uses enriched uranium fuel, it follows that states must be able either to enrich uranium or purchase it on an international market. [Mohamed ElBaradei](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohamed_ElBaradei), then Director General of the [International Atomic Energy Agency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Atomic_Energy_Agency), has called the spread of enrichment and reprocessing capabilities the "[Achilles' heel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achilles%27_heel)" of the nuclear nonproliferation regime. As of 2007 13 states have an enrichment capability.[14] Because the availability of fissile material has long been considered the principal obstacle to, and "pacing element" for, a country's nuclear weapons development effort, it was declared a major emphasis of U.S. policy in 2004 to prevent the further spread of uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing (a.k.a. "ENR") technology.[15] Countries possessing ENR capabilities, it is feared, have what is in effect the option of using this capability to produce fissile material for weapons use on demand, thus giving them what has been termed a "virtual" nuclear weapons program. The degree to which NPT members have a "right" to ENR technology notwithstanding its potentially grave proliferation implications, therefore, is at the cutting edge of policy and legal debates surrounding the meaning of Article IV and its relation to Articles I, II, and III of the Treaty.

Countries that have signed the treaty as Non-Nuclear Weapons States and maintained that status have an unbroken record of not building nuclear weapons. However, [Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq) was cited by the IAEA with punitive sanctions enacted against it by the UN Security Council for violating its NPT safeguards obligations; [North Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Korea) never came into compliance with its NPT safeguards agreement and was cited repeatedly for these violations,[16] and later withdrew from the NPT and tested multiple nuclear devices; [Iran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran) was found in non-compliance with its NPT safeguards obligations in an unusual non-consensus decision because it "failed in a number of instances over an extended period of time" to report aspects of its enrichment program;[17][18] and [Libya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libya) pursued a clandestine nuclear weapons program before abandoning it in December 2003. In 1991 Romania reported previously undeclared nuclear activities by the former regime and the IAEA reported this non-compliance to the Security Council for information only. In some regions, the fact that all neighbors are verifiably free of nuclear weapons reduces any pressure individual states might feel to build those weapons themselves, even if neighbors are known to have peaceful nuclear energy programs that might otherwise be suspicious. In this, the treaty works as designed.

In 2004, [Mohamed ElBaradei](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohamed_ElBaradei), the then Director General of the [International Atomic Energy Agency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Atomic_Energy_Agency) (IAEA), said that by some estimates thirty-five to forty states could have the knowledge to develop nuclear weapons.[19]

[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nuclear_Non-Proliferation_Treaty&action=edit&section=5)]

Key articles

Article I:[20] Each nuclear-weapons state (NWS) undertakes not to transfer, to any recipient, nuclear weapons, or other nuclear explosive devices, and not to assist any non-nuclear weapon state to manufacture or acquire such weapons or devices.

Article II: Each non-NWS party undertakes not to receive, from any source, nuclear weapons, or other nuclear explosive devices; not to manufacture or acquire such weapons or devices; and not to receive any assistance in their manufacture.

Article III: Each non-NWS party undertakes to conclude an agreement with the IAEA for the application of its safeguards to all nuclear material in all of the state's peaceful nuclear activities and to prevent diversion of such material to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Article IV: 1. Nothing in this Treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I and II of this Treaty.

2. All the Parties to the Treaty undertake to facilitate, and have the right to participate in, the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Parties to the Treaty in a position to do so shall also co-operate in contributing alone or together with other States or international organizations to the further development of the applications of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, especially in the territories of non-nuclear-weapon States Party to the Treaty, with due consideration for the needs of the developing areas of the world.

Article VI. The states undertake to pursue "negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament", and towards a "Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control".

Article X. Establishes the right to withdraw from the Treaty giving 3 months' notice. It also establishes the duration of the Treaty (25 years before 1995 Extension Initiative).

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History

*See also:* [*Nuclear proliferation*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_proliferation)

The impetus behind the NPT was concern for the safety of a world with many nuclear weapon states. It was recognized that the [cold war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_war) deterrent relationship between just the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) and [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) was fragile. Having more nuclear nuclear-weapon states would reduce security for all, multiplying the risks of miscalculation, accidents, unauthorized use of weapons, or from escalation in tensions, nuclear conflict.

The NPT process was launched by [Frank Aiken](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Aiken), Irish Minister for External Affairs, in 1958. It was opened for signature in 1968, with Finland the first State to sign. By 1992 all five then-declared nuclear powers had signed the treaty, and the treaty was renewed in 1995 (and followed by the [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comprehensive_Test_Ban_Treaty) in 1996, which has not entered into force). Several NPT signatories have given up nuclear weapons or nuclear weapons programs. [South Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa) undertook a nuclear weapons program, allegedly with the assistance of Israel in the 1970s, and [may have conducted](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vela_Incident) a nuclear test in the [Indian Ocean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Ocean) in 1979, but has since renounced its nuclear program and signed the treaty in 1991 after destroying its small nuclear [arsenal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arsenal). Several former Soviet Republics destroyed or transferred to Russia the nuclear weapons inherited from the Soviet Union.

[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nuclear_Non-Proliferation_Treaty&action=edit&section=7)]

**United States-NATO nuclear weapons sharing**

[Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear-Weapon-Free_Zone)

[Nuclear weapons states](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_weapons_states)

[Nuclear sharing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_sharing)

     Neither, but NPT

*Main article:* [*Nuclear sharing*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_sharing)

At the time the treaty was being negotiated, [NATO](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NATO) had in place secret [nuclear weapons sharing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_sharing) agreements whereby the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) provided nuclear weapons to be deployed by, and stored in, other NATO states. Some argue this is an act of proliferation violating Articles I and II of the treaty. A counter-argument is that the U.S. controlled the weapons in storage within the NATO states, and that no transfer of the weapons or control over them was intended "unless and until a decision were made to go to war, at which the treaty would no longer be controlling", so there is no breach of the NPT. These agreements were disclosed to a few of the states, including the [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union), negotiating the treaty, but most of the states that signed the NPT in 1968 would not have known about these agreements and interpretations at that time.[21]

As of 2005, it is estimated that the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) still provides about 180 tactical [B61 nuclear bombs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B61_nuclear_bomb) for use by [Belgium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belgium), [Germany](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany), [Italy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy), the [Netherlands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netherlands) and [Turkey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkey) under these NATO agreements.[22] Many states, and the [Non-Aligned Movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-Aligned_Movement), now argue this violates Articles I and II of the treaty, and are applying diplomatic pressure to terminate these agreements. They point out that the pilots and other staff of the "non-nuclear" NATO states practice handling and delivering the U.S. nuclear bombs, and non-U.S. warplanes have been adapted to deliver U.S. nuclear bombs which must have involved the transfer of some technical nuclear weapons information. NATO believes its "nuclear forces continue to play an essential role in war prevention, but their role is now more fundamentally political".[23] NATO officials also point out that no nuclear weapons have ever been given over to non-U.S. control by the United States, so therefore there cannot have been a violation of Article I (which prohibits transferring "nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosive devices") or Article II (which bars "receiv[ing] the transfer from any transferor whatsoever of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or of control over such weapons or explosive devices").

U.S. nuclear sharing policies were originally designed to help prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons—not least by persuading the then West Germany not to develop an independent nuclear capability by assuring it that West Germany would be able, in the event of war with the Warsaw Pact, to wield (U.S.) nuclear weapons in self-defense. (Until that point of all-out war, however, the weapons themselves would remain in U.S. hands.) The point was to limit the spread of countries having their own nuclear weapons programs, helping ensure that NATO allies would not choose to go down the proliferation route.[24] (West Germany was discussed in U.S. intelligence estimates for a number of years as being a country with the potential to develop nuclear weapons capabilities of its own if officials in Bonn were not convinced that their defense against the Soviet Union and its allies could otherwise be met.[25])

[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nuclear_Non-Proliferation_Treaty&action=edit&section=8)]

**India, Israel, and Pakistan**

*See also:* [*India and weapons of mass destruction*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India_and_weapons_of_mass_destruction)*,* [*Israel and weapons of mass destruction*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel_and_weapons_of_mass_destruction)*, and* [*Pakistan and weapons of mass destruction*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan_and_weapons_of_mass_destruction)

Three states—[India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India), [Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel), and [Pakistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan)—have declined to [sign the treaty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_parties_to_the_Nuclear_Non-Proliferation_Treaty). India and Pakistan are confirmed nuclear powers, and Israel has a long-standing [policy of deliberate ambiguity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Policy_of_deliberate_ambiguity) (see [List of countries with nuclear weapons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_with_nuclear_weapons)). These countries argue that the NPT creates a club of "nuclear haves" and a larger group of "nuclear have-nots" by restricting the legal possession of nuclear weapons to those states that tested them before 1967, but the treaty never explains on what [ethical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethical) grounds such a distinction is valid.

India and Pakistan have publicly announced possession of nuclear weapons and have detonated nuclear devices in tests, India having [first done so](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smiling_Buddha) in 1974 and Pakistan following [suit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chagai-I) in 1998 in [response](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chagai-II) to [another Indian test](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pokhran-II).[26] India is estimated to have enough fissile material for more than 150 warheads.[27] Pakistan reportedly has between 80 and 120 warheads according to the former head of its strategic arms division.[28] India is one of the few countries to have a [no first use](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_first_use) policy, a pledge not to use nuclear weapons unless first attacked by an adversary using nuclear weapons.[29] India's External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee said during a visit to Tokyo in 2007: "If India did not sign the NPT, it is not because of its lack of commitment for non-proliferation, but because we consider NPT as a flawed treaty and it did not recognise the need for universal, non-discriminatory verification and treatment."[30]

According to leaked intelligence, Israel has been developing nuclear weapons at its [Dimona](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dimona) site in the [Negev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negev) since 1958, and many nonproliferation analysts like David Albright estimate that Israel may have stockpiled between 100 to 200 warheads using the plutonium reprocessed from Dimona. The Israeli government refuses to confirm or deny possession of nuclear weapons, although this is now regarded as an [open secret](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_secret) after Israeli low level nuclear technician [Mordechai Vanunu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mordechai_Vanunu)—subsequently arrested and sentenced for treason by Israel—published evidence about the program to the [British](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) [*Sunday Times*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sunday_Times_(UK)) in 1986.

In early March 2006, India and the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) finalized an agreement, in the face of criticism in both countries, to provide India with US civilian nuclear technology. Under the deal India has committed to classify 14 of its 22 nuclear power plants as being for civilian use and to place them under [IAEA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IAEA) safeguards. [Mohamed ElBaradei](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohamed_ElBaradei), the Director General of the [IAEA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IAEA), welcomed the deal by calling India "an important partner in the non-proliferation regime."[31]

In December 2006, [United States Congress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Congress) approved the [United States-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States-India_Peaceful_Atomic_Energy_Cooperation_Act) that was cemented during President Bush's visit to India earlier in the year. The legislation allows for the transfer of civilian nuclear material to India. Despite its status outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, India was granted these transactions on the basis of its clean non-proliferation record, and India's unusually high need for energy fueled by its rapid industrialization and a billion-plus population.[32]

On August 1, 2008, the [IAEA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IAEA) approved the India Safeguards Agreement[33] and on September 6, 2008, India was granted the waiver at the [Nuclear Suppliers Group](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_Suppliers_Group) (NSG) meeting held in Vienna, Austria. The consensus was arrived after overcoming misgivings expressed by Austria, Ireland and New Zealand and is an unprecedented step in giving exemption to a country, which has not signed the NPT and the [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comprehensive_Test_Ban_Treaty) (CTBT).[34][35] While India could commence nuclear trade with other willing countries.[36] The U.S. Congress approved this agreement and the President signed it on 8 October 2008.[37]

The NSG Guidelines currently rule out nuclear exports by all major suppliers to Pakistan and Israel, with very narrow exceptions, since neither has full-scope IAEA safeguards (i.e. safeguards on all its nuclear activities). Attempts by Pakistan to reach a similar agreement have been rebuffed by the United States and other NSG members. The argument put forth is that not only does Pakistan lack the same energy requirements but that the track record of Pakistan as a nuclear proliferator makes it impossible for it to have any sort of nuclear deal in the near future.[38]

On September 18, 2009 the General Conference of the [International Atomic Energy Agency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Atomic_Energy_Agency) called on Israel to open its nuclear facilities to IAEA inspection and adhere to the non-proliferation treaty as part of a resolution on "Israeli nuclear capabilities," which passed by a narrow margin of 49-45 with 16 abstentions. The chief Israeli delegate stated that "Israel will not co-operate in any matter with this resolution."[39]

As of January 2011, Australia, a [top three producer and home to worlds largest known reserves](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uranium_mining_in_Australia), has continued their refusal to export Uranium to India because it has not signed the NPT despite diplomatic pressure on their part.[40]

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**North Korea**

*See also:* [*North Korea and weapons of mass destruction*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Korea_and_weapons_of_mass_destruction)*,* [*2006 North Korean nuclear test*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2006_North_Korean_nuclear_test)*, and* [*Six-party talks*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six-party_talks)

[North Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Korea) ratified the treaty on December 12, 1985, but gave notice of withdrawal from the treaty on January 10, 2003 following U.S. allegations that it had started an illegal [enriched uranium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enriched_uranium) weapons program, and the U.S. subsequently stopping [fuel oil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuel_oil) shipments under the [Agreed Framework](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agreed_Framework)[41] which had resolved plutonium weapons issues in 1994.[42] The withdrawal became effective April 10, 2003 making North Korea the first state ever to withdraw from the treaty.[43] North Korea had once before announced withdrawal, on March 12, 1993, but suspended that notice before it came into effect.[44]

On February 10, 2005, North Korea publicly declared that it possessed nuclear weapons and pulled out of the [six-party talks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six-party_talks) hosted by China to find a diplomatic solution to the issue. "We had already taken the resolute action of pulling out of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and have manufactured nuclear arms for self-defence to cope with the Bush administration's evermore undisguised policy to isolate and stifle the DPRK [Democratic People's Republic of Korea]," a North Korean Foreign Ministry statement said regarding the issue.[45] Six-party talks resumed in July 2005.

On September 19, 2005, North Korea announced that it would agree to a preliminary accord. Under the accord, North Korea would scrap all of its existing nuclear weapons and nuclear production facilities, rejoin the NPT, and readmit IAEA inspectors. The difficult issue of the supply of [light water reactors](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Light_water_reactor) to replace North Korea's [indigenous nuclear power plant program](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yongbyon_Reactors), as per the 1994 [Agreed Framework](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agreed_Framework), was left to be resolved in future discussions.[46] On the next day North Korea reiterated its known view that until it is supplied with a light water reactor it will not dismantle its nuclear arsenal or rejoin the NPT.[47]

On October 2, 2006, the North Korean foreign minister announced that his country was planning to conduct a nuclear test "in the future", although it did not state when.[48] On Monday, October 9, 2006 at 01:35:28 (UTC) the [United States Geological Survey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Geological_Survey) detected a magnitude 4.3 [seismic event](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seismology) 70 km (45 miles) north of Kimchaek, North Korea indicating a nuclear test.[49] The North Korean government announced shortly afterward that they had completed [a successful underground test](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2006_North_Korean_nuclear_test) of a nuclear fission device.

In 2007, reports from Washington suggested that the 2002 [CIA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CIA) reports stating that North Korea was developing an enriched uranium weapons program, which led to North Korea leaving the NPT, had overstated or misread the intelligence.[50][51][52][53] On the other hand, even apart from these press allegations—which some critics worry could have been planted in order to justify the United States giving up trying to verify the dismantlement of Pyongyang's uranium program in the face of North Korean intransigence—there remains some information in the public record indicating the existence of a uranium effort. Quite apart from the fact that North Korean First Vice Minister Kang Sok Ju at one point admitted the existence of a uranium enrichment program, Pakistan's then-President Musharraf revealed that the [A.Q. Khan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A.Q._Khan) proliferation network had provided North Korea with a number of gas centrifuges designed for uranium enrichment. Additionally, press reports have cited U.S. officials to the effect that evidence obtained in dismantling Libya’s WMD programs points toward North Korea as the source for Libya's [uranium hexafluoride](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uranium_hexafluoride) (UF6) -- which, if true, would mean that North Korea has a uranium conversion facility for producing feedstock for centrifuge enrichment.[54]

[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nuclear_Non-Proliferation_Treaty&action=edit&section=10)]

**Iran**

*Main articles:* [*Iran and weapons of mass destruction*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran_and_weapons_of_mass_destruction) *and* [*Nuclear program of Iran*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_program_of_Iran)

[Iran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran) is a party to the NPT, but was found in non-compliance with its NPT safeguards agreement and the status of its nuclear program remains in dispute. In November 2003 [IAEA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Atomic_Energy_Agency) Director General [Mohamed ElBaradei](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohamed_ElBaradei) reported that Iran had repeatedly and over an extended period failed to meet its safeguards obligations, including by failing to declare its uranium enrichment program.[17] After about two years of EU3-led diplomatic efforts and Iran temporarily suspending its enrichment program,[55] the IAEA Board of Governors, acting under Article XII.C of the IAEA Statute, found in a rare non-consensus decision with 12 abstentions that these failures constituted non-compliance with the IAEA safeguards agreement.[18] This was reported to the [UN Security Council](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council) in 2006,[56] after which the Security Council passed a resolution demanding that Iran suspend its enrichment.[57] Instead, Iran resumed its enrichment program.[58]

The IAEA has been able to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material in Iran, and is continuing its work on verifying the absence of undeclared activities.[59] In February 2008, the IAEA also reported that it was working to address "alleged studies" of weaponization, based on documents provided by certain Member States, which those states claimed originated from Iran. Iran rejected the allegations as "baseless" and the documents as "fabrications."[60] In June 2009, the IAEA reported that Iran had not “cooperated with the Agency in connection with the remaining issues ... which need to be clarified to exclude the possibility of military dimensions to Iran’s nuclear program.”[61]

The United States concluded that Iran violated its Article III NPT safeguards obligations, and further argued based on circumstantial evidence that Iran's enrichment program was for weapons purposes and therefore violated Iran's Article II nonproliferation obligations.[62] The November 2007 US [National Intelligence Estimate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Intelligence_Estimate) (NIE) later concluded that Iran had halted an active nuclear weapons program in the fall of 2003 and that it had remained halted as of mid-2007. The NIE's "Key Judgments," however, also made clear that what Iran had actually stopped in 2003 was only "nuclear weapon design and weaponization work and covert uranium conversion-related and uranium enrichment-related work"-namely, those aspects of Iran's nuclear weapons effort that had not by that point already been leaked to the press and become the subject of IAEA investigations.[63] Since Iran's uranium enrichment program at Natanz—and its continuing work on a heavy water reactor at Arak that would be ideal for plutonium production—began secretly years before in conjunction with the very weaponization work the NIE discussed and for the purpose of developing nuclear weapons, many observers find Iran's continued development of fissile material production capabilities distinctly worrying. Particularly because fissile material availability has long been understood to be the principal obstacle to nuclear weapons development and the primary "pacing element" for a weapons program, the fact that Iran has reportedly suspended weaponization work may not mean very much.[64] As U.S. Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell has put it, the aspects of its work that Iran allegedly suspended were thus "probably the least significant part of the program."[65]

Iran states it has a legal right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes under the NPT, and further says that it "has constantly complied with its obligations under the NPT and the Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency".[66] Iran also states that its enrichment program is part of its civilian nuclear energy program, which is allowed under Article IV of the NPT. The Non-Aligned Movement has welcomed the continuing cooperation of Iran with the IAEA and reaffirmed Iran's right to the peaceful uses of nuclear technology.[67] [UN Secretary General](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secretary-General_of_the_United_Nations) [Ban Ki-moon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ban_Ki-moon) has welcomed the continued dialogue between Iran and the IAEA, and has called for a peaceful resolution to the issue.[68]

In April 2010, Washington stepped up its efforts to impose a new round of sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program. But key Asian powers such as India and China oppose the adoption of a new round of sanctions against Tehran.

[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nuclear_Non-Proliferation_Treaty&action=edit&section=11)]

**South Africa**

*See also:* [*South Africa and weapons of mass destruction*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa_and_weapons_of_mass_destruction)

[South Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa) is the only country that developed nuclear weapons by itself and later dismantled them – unlike the former [Soviet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet) states [Ukraine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukraine), [Belarus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belarus) and [Kazakhstan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kazakhstan), which inherited nuclear weapons from the former [USSR](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USSR) and also acceded to the NPT as non-nuclear weapon states.

During the days of [apartheid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apartheid), the white South African government developed a deep fear of both a black uprising and the threat of communism. This led to the development of a secret nuclear weapons program as an ultimate deterrent. South Africa has a large supply of uranium, which is mined in the country's gold mines. The government built a nuclear research facility at [Pelindaba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pelindaba) near Pretoria where uranium was enriched to fuel grade for the [Koeberg Nuclear Power Station](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koeberg_Nuclear_Power_Station) as well as weapon grade for bomb production.

In 1991, after international pressure and when a change of government was imminent, South African Ambassador to the United States [Harry Schwarz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Schwarz) signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In 1993, the then president [Frederik Willem de Klerk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederik_Willem_de_Klerk) openly admitted that the country had developed a limited nuclear weapon capability. These weapons were subsequently dismantled before South Africa acceded to the NPT and opened itself up to IAEA inspection. In 1994 the IAEA completed its work and declared that the country had fully dismantled its nuclear weapons program.

[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nuclear_Non-Proliferation_Treaty&action=edit&section=12)]

**Libya**

Libya had signed and ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and was subject to IAEA nuclear safeguards inspections, but undertook a secret nuclear weapons development program in violation of its NPT obligations, using material and technology provided by the [A.Q. Khan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A.Q._Khan) proliferation network[69]—including actual nuclear weapons designed allegedly originating in China. Libya began secret negotiations with the United States and the United Kingdom in March 2003 over potentially eliminating its WMD programs. In October 2003, Libya was embarrassed by the interdiction of a shipment of Pakistani-designed centrifuge parts sent from Malaysia, also as part of A. Q. Khan's proliferation ring.[70] In December 2003, Libya announced that it had agreed to eliminate all its WMD programs, and permitted U.S. and British teams (as well as IAEA inspectors) into the country to assist this process and verify its completion. The nuclear weapons designs, gas centrifuges for uranium enrichment, and other equipment—including prototypes for improved SCUD ballistic missiles—were removed from Libya by the United States. (Libyan chemical weapons stocks and chemical bombs were also destroyed on site with international verification, with Libya joining the Chemical Weapons Convention.) Libya's noncompliance with its IAEA safeguards was reported to the U.N. Security Council, but with no action taken, as Libya's return to compliance with safeguards and Article II of the NPT was welcomed.[71]

[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nuclear_Non-Proliferation_Treaty&action=edit&section=13)]

Leaving the treaty

Article X allows a state to leave the treaty if "extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of this Treaty, have jeopardized the supreme interests of its country", giving three months' (ninety days') notice. The state is required to give reasons for leaving the NPT in this notice.

[NATO](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NATO) states argue that when there is a state of "general war" the treaty no longer applies, effectively allowing the states involved to leave the treaty with no notice. This is a necessary argument to support the NATO [nuclear weapons sharing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_weapons_sharing) policy, but a troubling one for the logic of the treaty. NATO's argument is based on the phrase "the consequent need to make every effort to avert the danger of such a war" in the treaty preamble, inserted at the behest of U.S. diplomats, arguing that the treaty would at that point have failed to fulfill its function of prohibiting a general war and thus no longer be binding.[21] Many states do not accept this argument. See [United States-NATO nuclear weapons sharing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_Non-Proliferation_Treaty#United_States-NATO_nuclear_weapons_sharing) above.

North Korea has also caused an uproar by its use of this provision of the treaty. Article X.1 only requires a state to give three months' notice in total, and does not provide for other states to question a state's interpretation of "supreme interests of its country". In 1993, North Korea gave notice to withdraw from the NPT. However, after 89 days, North Korea reached agreement with the United States to freeze its nuclear program under the [Agreed Framework](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agreed_Framework) and "suspended" its withdrawal notice. In October 2002, the United States accused North Korea of violating the Agreed Framework by pursuing a secret uranium enrichment program, and suspended shipments of heavy fuel oil under that agreement. In response, North Korea expelled IAEA inspectors, disabled IAEA equipment, and, on January 10, 2003, announced that it was ending the suspension of its previous NPT withdrawal notification. North Korea said that only one more day's notice was sufficient for withdrawal from the NPT, as it had given 89 days before.[72] The IAEA Board of Governors rejected this interpretation.[73] Most countries held that a new three-months withdrawal notice was required, and some questioned whether North Korea's notification met the "extraordinary events" and "supreme interests" requirements of the Treaty. The Joint Statement of September 19, 2005 at the end of the Fourth Round of the [Six-Party Talks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six-Party_Talks) called for North Korea to "return" to the NPT, implicitly acknowledging that it had withdrawn.

[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nuclear_Non-Proliferation_Treaty&action=edit&section=14)]

Recent and coming events

The [2000 Review Conference](http://www.un.org/events/npt2000/) had as main outcome the definition in practical terms of the nuclear weapons states' disarmament obligations, summarized in the so called [Thirteen Steps](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirteen_Steps).

On 18 July 2005, US President George W. Bush had met Indian Prime Minister [Manmohan Singh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manmohan_Singh) and declared that he would work to change US law and international rules to permit trade in US civilian nuclear technology with India.[74] Some, such as British columnist [George Monbiot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Monbiot), argue that the U.S.-India nuclear deal, in combination with US attempts to deny [Iran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran) (an NPT signatory) civilian nuclear fuel-making technology, may destroy the NPT regime,[75] while others[[*who?*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Avoid_weasel_words)] contend that such a move will likely bring India, an NPT non-signatory, under closer international scrutiny.

At the [Seventh Review Conference in May 2005](http://www.un.org/events/npt2005/), there were stark differences between the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States), which wanted the conference to focus on non-proliferation, especially on its allegations against [Iran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran), and most other countries, who emphasized the lack of serious [nuclear disarmament](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_disarmament) by the nuclear powers. The [non-aligned countries](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-Aligned_Movement) reiterated their position emphasizing the need for nuclear disarmament.[76]

The [2010 Review Conference](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NPT_Review_Conference) was held in May 2010 in New York City, and adopted a final document that included a summary by the Review Conference President, Ambassador Libran Capactulan of the Philippines, and an Action Plan that was adopted by consensus.[77][78] The 2010 conference was generally considered a success because it reached consensus where the previous Review Conference in 2005 ended in disarray, a fact that many attributed to the [U.S. President](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_United_States) [Barack Obama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama)'s commitment to nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament. Some have warned that this success raised unrealistically high expectations that could lead to failure at the next Review Conference in 2015.[79]

The "[Global Summit on Nuclear Security](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_Summit_on_Nuclear_Security,_2010)" took place April 12–13, 2010. The summit was proposed by [President Obama in Prague](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama_speech_in_Prague,_2009) and is intended to strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in conjunction with the [Proliferation Security Initiative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proliferation_Security_Initiative) and the [Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_Initiative_to_Combat_Nuclear_Terrorism).[80] Forty seven states and three international organizations took part in the [Summit](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/key-facts-about-national-security-summit), which issued a communiqué[81] and a work plan.[82]

[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nuclear_Non-Proliferation_Treaty&action=edit&section=15)]

Criticism and responses

Some argue that the NWS have not fully complied with their disarmament obligations under Article VI of the NPT.[83]

On July 8, 1996 The International Court of Justice, in its Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, stated that "there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.[84] Such an obligation requires that states actively pursue measures to reduce the numbers of nuclear weapons and the importance of their role in military force structures. Some critics of the nuclear-weapons states contend that they have failed to comply with Article VI by failing to make disarmament the driving force in national planning and policy with respect to nuclear weapons, even while they ask other states to plan for their security without nuclear weapons.[85]

The United States responds to criticism of its disarmament record by pointing out that since the end of the Cold War it has eliminated over 13,000 nuclear weapons and eliminated over 80% of its deployed strategic warheads and 90% of non-strategic warheads deployed to NATO, in the processing eliminating whole categories of warheads and delivery systems and reducing its reliance on nuclear weapons.[*[citation needed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)*] U.S. officials have also pointed out the ongoing U.S. work to dismantle nuclear warheads. When current accelerated dismantlement efforts ordered by President George W. Bush have been completed, the U.S. arsenal will be less than a quarter of its size at the end of the Cold War, and smaller than it has been at any point since the Eisenhower administration, well before the drafting of the NPT.[86] The United States has also purchased many thousands of weapons' worth of uranium formerly in Soviet nuclear weapons for conversion into reactor fuel.[87] (As a consequence of this latter effort, it has been estimated that the equivalent of one lightbulb in every ten in the United States is powered by nuclear fuel removed from warheads previously targeted at the United States and its allies during the Cold War.[88]) The U.S. Special Representative for Nuclear Nonproliferation agreed that nonproliferation and disarmament are linked, noting that they can be mutually reinforcing but also that growing proliferation risks create an environment that makes disarmament more difficult.[89] The United Kingdom,[90] France[91] and Russia[92] likewise defend their nuclear disarmament records, and the five NPT NWS issued a joint statement in 2008 reaffirming their Article VI disarmament commitments.[93] As discussed above, the precise nature of nuclear weapons state obligations, if any, under Article VI of the Treaty is sharply contested.

WikiLeaks diplomatic cables titled "[NONPROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT) BILATERALS](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/219798%7CNUCLEAR)" sent on 6 August 2009, "[POSITION ON NUCLEAR ISSUES IN THE RUN-UP](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/218931%7CFRANCE'S)" sent on 31 July 2009 and "[DOUBTS AND REASSURANCES ABOUT REPLACING BRITAIN'S TRIDENT NUCLEAR DETERRENT](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/218106)" sent on 24 July 2009,; make it possible to gain an insight to France's thought and P3 (US, France & UK) tacit agreements and doctrine with regards to nuclear weapons, NPT and disarmament issues.